

HIBERNIAN HALL

105 Meeting Street, Charleston

Completed in 1840 from designs by Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter to house a social and charitable organization, this Greek Revival structure is the only extant building associated with the Democratic Convention of 1860. This was one of the most critical political assemblies in the history of the United States, with Hibernian Hall serving as headquarters for the faction supporting Stephen A. Douglas, the pivotal personality of the convention. An observant reporter passing by after Douglas failed to gain the nomination saw “the Douglas delegation . . . from Illinois seated mournfully on the steps. . . . They were pensive and silent.” Failing to secure a two-thirds majority for any candidate here, and at a subsequent convention in Baltimore, the Democrats were too fractured to agree on a nominee. By the time Douglas was finally selected, his party was so divided that the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, was ensured victory later that year.